

CAF Culture Change: A Critical Approach to Learning

Marshall Gerbrandt, PhD student, University of New Brunswick



Current Approaches to Military Education¹

Technical: Instructor-led classes focus on knowledge replication, such as demonstrating an ability to use a weapon or memorizing a list of safety requirements.

Humanist: Through scenarios and case studies, students are guided by an instructor to understand themselves and others, such as learning about rules of engagement or ethics.

What should Military Education include?¹

Critical: Instructors help students examine and critique society, institutions, and their role in cultural reproduction. Students explore root causes of issues such as racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Effective education:

- meets people where they are in terms of readiness to learn
- names root causes
- supports critical reflection, unlearning, and rethinking



Move from Values-in-Use to Espoused Values²

Effective education can be achieved through conversations focused on:

Opinions versus Knowledge. Recognize the difference between opinion (personal and common understandings) and knowledge (socially constructed, critical, and based upon expertise). Challenge institutional discourse about who is viewed as an ideal soldier/sailor/aviator.

Position Selves. Understand that identity is who one is, in relation to others and the world. Recognize that one's standpoint filters what and how one sees others, which includes institutional identities such as rank (i.e., officers and NCMs) and occupation (i.e., logistics and combat arms).

Groups and Identities. Acknowledge how positionality groups people in relation to the dominant group. Move beyond individual claims or anecdotes by drawing attention to patterns and considering how certain groups are perceived in relationship to the institution, such as for whom personal protective equipment is designed.

Prejudice and Discrimination. Accept prejudices are learned prejudgements and often based upon stereotypes. Actively recognize and acknowledge how implicit bias intersects with military service.

Power and Oppression. Recognize oppression is prejudice and discrimination of one social group against another, backed by institutional power. Power combined with group prejudice equals oppression. Educate oneself on how the Canadian military has historically oppressed and excluded certain groups.

Understanding Inclusion. Acknowledge that hateful and discriminatory behavior, conduct, or association subverts inclusion. Identify root causes for who is excluded and who is included in military norms.

References

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